

OBSTETRIC FISTULA PREVENTION,
TREATMENT, HOPE AND DIGNITY
RESTORATION ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, today, along with Representatives BALDWIN, HIRONO, MOORE, and STARK, I am reintroducing comprehensive legislation to both prevent new obstetric fistulas and treat existing ones. The "Fistula Prevention, Treatment, Hope and Dignity Restoration Act" will bring new hope and opportunities to finally end this preventable condition. On the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, this is a fitting bill that will help millions of women achieve their maximum potential.

Pregnancy shouldn't leave a woman with a disability and ostracized from her community. Congress should ensure investments for the more than two million women worldwide that have obstetric fistula and we do what we can to prevent new cases. Fistula results from prolonged labor without medical attention due to the pressure created internally from obstructed delivery, which kills tissue where a hole between the woman's vagina and rectum develops, leaving her without control of her bladder and/or bowels for the rest of her life if she goes untreated. It often results in the death of the infant. Many women with obstetric fistula are abandoned by their husbands and families because they are considered "unclean" due to leaking excrement. Left without support, the women are forced to beg or turn to sex work to survive.

Fistula was once common throughout the world, but over the last century has been eradicated in Europe and North America through medical care. For example, New York's hospital for fistula patients, now the site of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, closed in 1895 due to diminishing cases. But still in 2011, from Bangladesh to Botswana, women continue to face these challenging deliveries and the complications associated with them, including obstetric fistulas.

Fortunately, multilateral organizations such as UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, and its partners in the Campaign to End Fistula, as well as bilateral organizations such as USAID are working with partners on a global campaign to prevent and treat fistula with the goal of making the condition as rare in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia as it is in the United States. Being able to repair a fistula is life changing—and it will have a direct impact on a woman and her family if she is able to stay in her community, rather than to be shunned. At this point, the global community can do just that for about \$300 for each repair.

This bill authorizes the President to provide assistance to prevent and treat fistula. This legislation allows for a comprehensive, three pronged approach of prevention, treatment and reintegration which includes: increasing access to prenatal care, emergency obstetric care, postnatal care, and voluntary family planning; building local capacity and improving national health systems; addressing underlying social and economic inequities such as reducing the incidence of child marriage and increasing access to formal and informal education; and supporting reintegration and train-

ing programs to help women who have undergone treatment return to full and productive lives. These essential investments create a multiplier effect of benefits in the lives of women and their communities. The legislation also supports coordination among the community working to prevent and treat obstetric fistula through the International Obstetric Fistula Working Group. Support for monitoring, evaluation, and research to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of such programs throughout their planning and implementation phases will ensure the most efficient and effective use of U.S. foreign assistance dollars.

I urge my colleagues to support this important, meaningful legislation.

HONORING CHRISTOPHER FILLYAW

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize 12-year-old Christopher Fillyaw, of Waterville, Maine, and his participation in Civic Day 2010 at the Alford Youth Center, in Waterville, Maine.

On Civic Day 2010, 8 students from Benton Elementary School shadowed civic leaders to learn about the important work that they do to serve their communities. I was very impressed with Christopher's comments during a ceremony honoring our troops and would like to enter his remarks into the RECORD:

I would like to start out by saying Thank You to all of our brave men and women and their families in the military. They risk their lives and the lives of their families and fight everyday to ensure the freedoms that we as Americans enjoy and sometimes take for granted. If it were not for these brave men and women who serve our country so well, who knows where we would be today.

We really owe them so much more than they receive, for every day is a struggle and the hardships they have to endure while they are in enemy's territory away from loved ones and unfamiliar grounds and then here at home getting readjusted to fit back into their own surroundings. There are no words to describe how important of a job they have and the sacrifices they have to make to do their jobs. It is really amazing. This is one of the hardest and most unbearable jobs in the world to risk the life of your own and the stability of your own family in hopes to save and secure the American way.

I hope that when I grow up I can pay a little something back in some way to show how much I thank them for making my life and my family's life safer.

Chris's comments ring true and showcase the next generation's respect for the sacrifice made by those who keep all of us safe here at home.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the words of Christopher Fillyaw and his commitment to public service.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 130TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN AND THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW YORK CITY BRANCH

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Women's History Month to recognize the 125th Anniversary of the American Association of University Women New York City Branch. Since 1881 the American Association of University Women, AAUW, has been the nation's leading voice promoting education and equity for women and girls. Through its vital nationwide network, AAUW influences public debate on critical social issues such as education, civil rights, and health care.

AAUW sponsors community programs; publishes groundbreaking research on women, girls and education; provides the world's largest source of funding exclusively for graduate women; and fights sex discrimination in education. AAUW's work extends globally through its membership in the International Federation of University Women, 72 national federations and associations worldwide.

The New York City Branch was founded in 1886 and is the second oldest established Chapter in the nation. In 1949, the New York City chapter purchased their Victorian Italianate Brownstone headquarters at 111 East 37th Street in the historic Murray Hill district of Manhattan. Under the leadership of President Dr. Nkechi Agwu, the Association continues to carry out the mission, value statement, vision and diversity of this great institution.

In 1951, under the Presidency of Dr. Ruth Wright, the New York City Branch began to honor women who have contributed immensely to the city, nation and the world. These were women who made outstanding contributions in many fields—education, the arts, business, science, medicine, anthropology, law and journalism. Some notable past "Woman of Achievement" honorees include African American trailblazing history makers like operatic and concert singer, Marian Anderson; American journalist and former foreign news correspondent, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, who was also one of the first Black students to attend the University of Georgia and graduate; and "The Mother of Medicine in Harlem," Dr. Muriel Petioni, who founded the Susan Smith McKinney Steward Medical Society for Black women physicians.

This year's theme, "She Touched Me," will salute distinguished women who have played an important role in spearheading women and girl issues throughout this Nation and around the world. Please join in recognizing the 130th Anniversary of the American Association of University Women and the 125th Anniversary of the New York City Branch Chapter.